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CEREBUS

99
JUN

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AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

Two points in the fan press we'd like to cover. The first is Heidi MacDonald's assertion in a not-so-recent overview of Cerebus informing me that "even the Pope isn't infallible, Dave". I take exception to this because it is one of the central themes of "Church and State" and I hate to see it dismissed so off-handedly I don't think the Pope is infallible. I infer from her words that **Heidi** doesn't think the Pope is infallible. But the fact remains that the Catholic Church is, in large measure, founded on the notion that he **is**. Millions of people believe it. As a good Catholic, John-Paul must believe it. Does that make it true? Depends on whether you believe it or not, doesn't it? Or does it? That's the central question, here.

The second is Robert Ingersoll (a decidedly colourless Cleveland public defender — my impression from our only meeting two years ago — as well as columnist for the CBG) and his tantrum over the rape scene in #94 (or the "rape" scene depending on your viewpoint). In good lawyerly fashion, he pontificates (!) that in #95 Cerebus should be "thrown in jail" for the crime committed in #94. My question would be "by whom?" And this was the point (related to my quarrel with Heidi above) I was attempting to address. Ingersoll, incapable of appreciating subtle points of morality wrapped as he is in the security blanket of jurisprudence missed this one by a good dozen yards. Who is going to throw the Pope in jail? In all the media coverage of Jessica Hahn and Jim Bakker, much is made of their "liason" and their "tryst", his "indiscretion". No one seemed to be listening to Miss Hahn who said she was an "admirer" of Bakker; a good Christian; that she had no thought or intention of having sex with him in that hotel room. Isn't that rape? Is there not some legal principle that needs to be devised for this situation? When JFK was pushing ladies into anterooms and hiking up their skirts for a quick one is it not possible that he would say (avec boyish grin) "As your commander-in-chief I command you to stop struggling". Would a woman who **didn't** stop struggling have been guilty of treason?

I believe Cerebus raped Astoria. A number of Cerebus fans don't think so, venturing the opinion "she was asking for it". Are they wrong? It depends on your point of view. I don't think there is such a thing as "asking for it" (unless she literally "asks for it" verbally). Cerebus changed the terms under which she was offering her "favour" (one of which was a gag to preclude any dissension). That is rape (to me). As I say a number of readers disagree. Kind of scary.

When federal laws governing sexual crimes were being revised in Canada during Trudeau's last term in office, then-Justice Minister Jean Chretien (a man I otherwise admire a great deal) in discussing rape ventured the opinion that if a woman agreed to have sex with a number of men (say the front-line of a football team), she could not have a member of that team charged with rape if she had not wanted to have sex with him particularly. I find **that** attitude reprehensible. If a woman wants to have sex with the entire American League East Division with the exception of Jesse Barfield and Mr. Barfield won't take no for an answer, Mr. Barfield should be charged with forcible rape.

It's also odd to me that **none** of the Aardvark Comments regarding the rape (or "rape") in #94 have been from female readers.

Opinions, ladies?

CEREBUS

No. 99 JUNE 1987

DAVE SIM
President

KAREN McKIEL
Administrator

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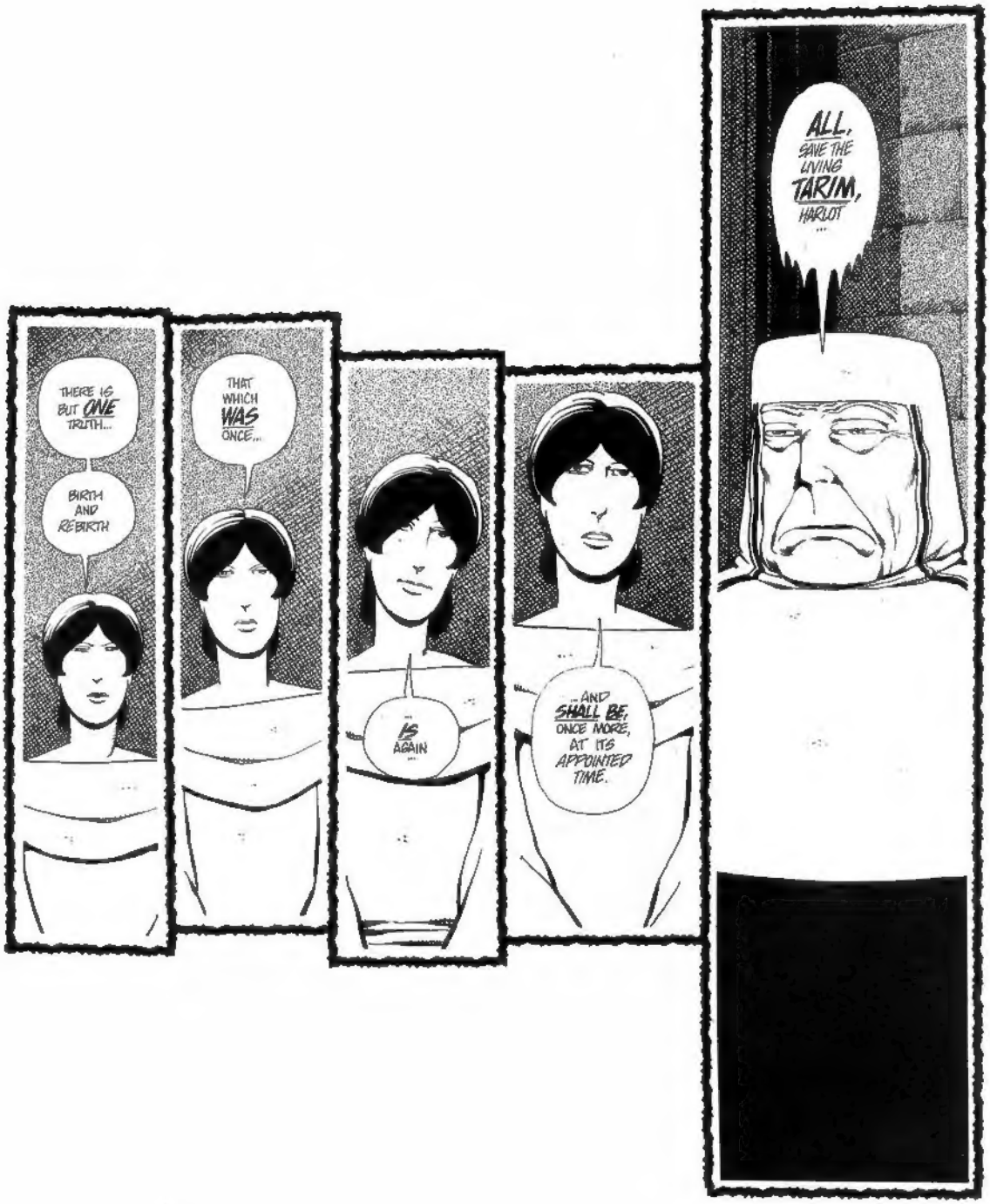
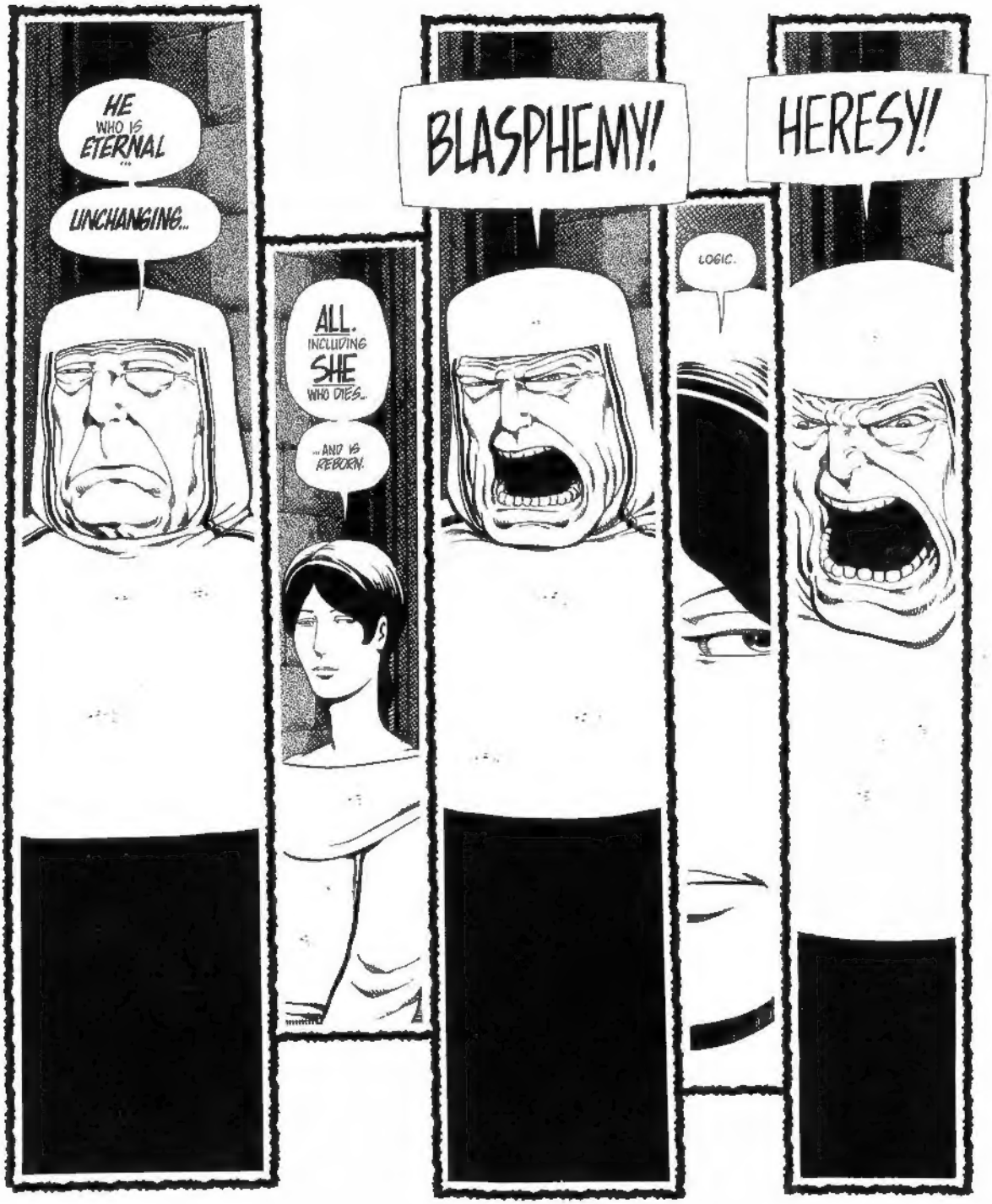
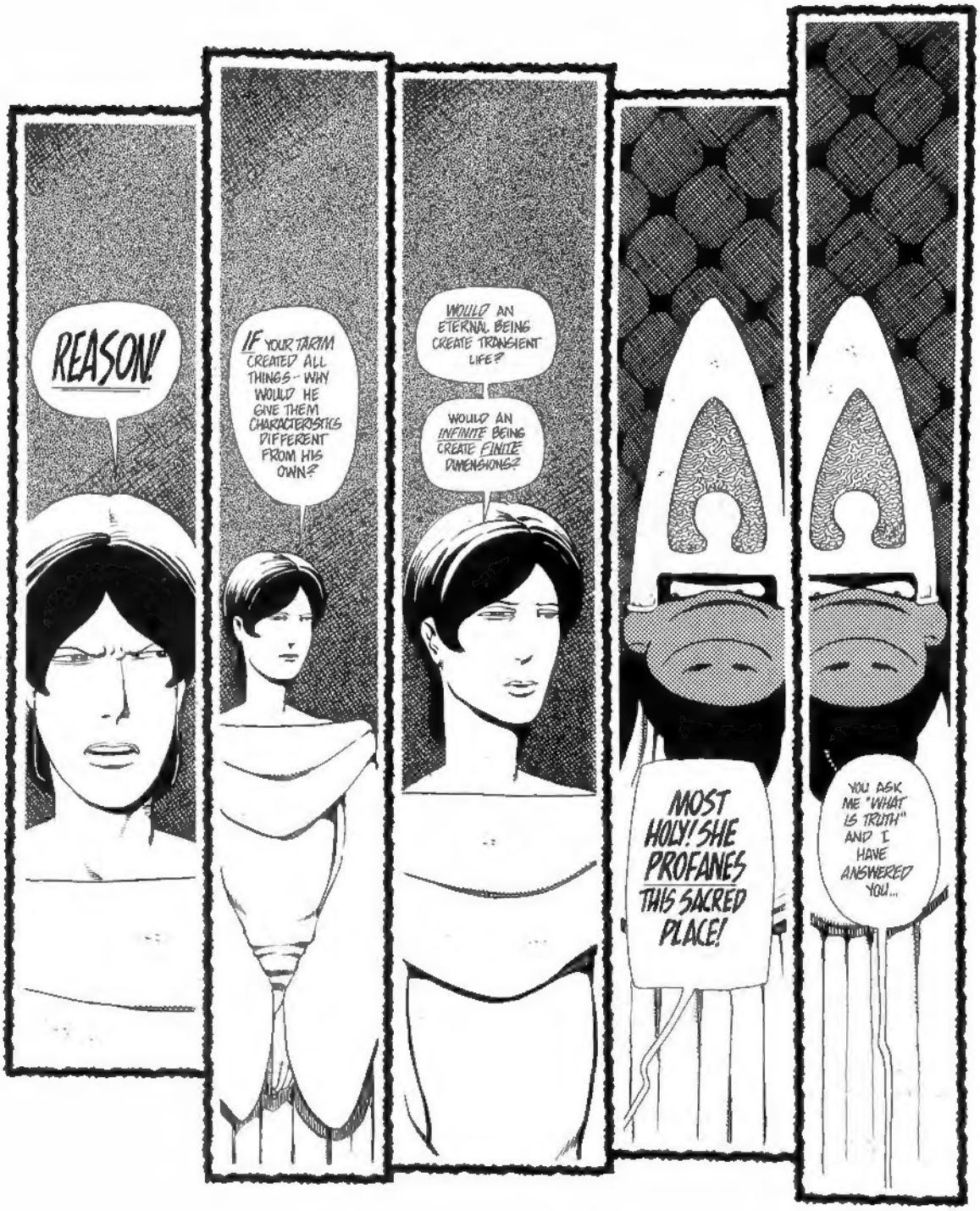
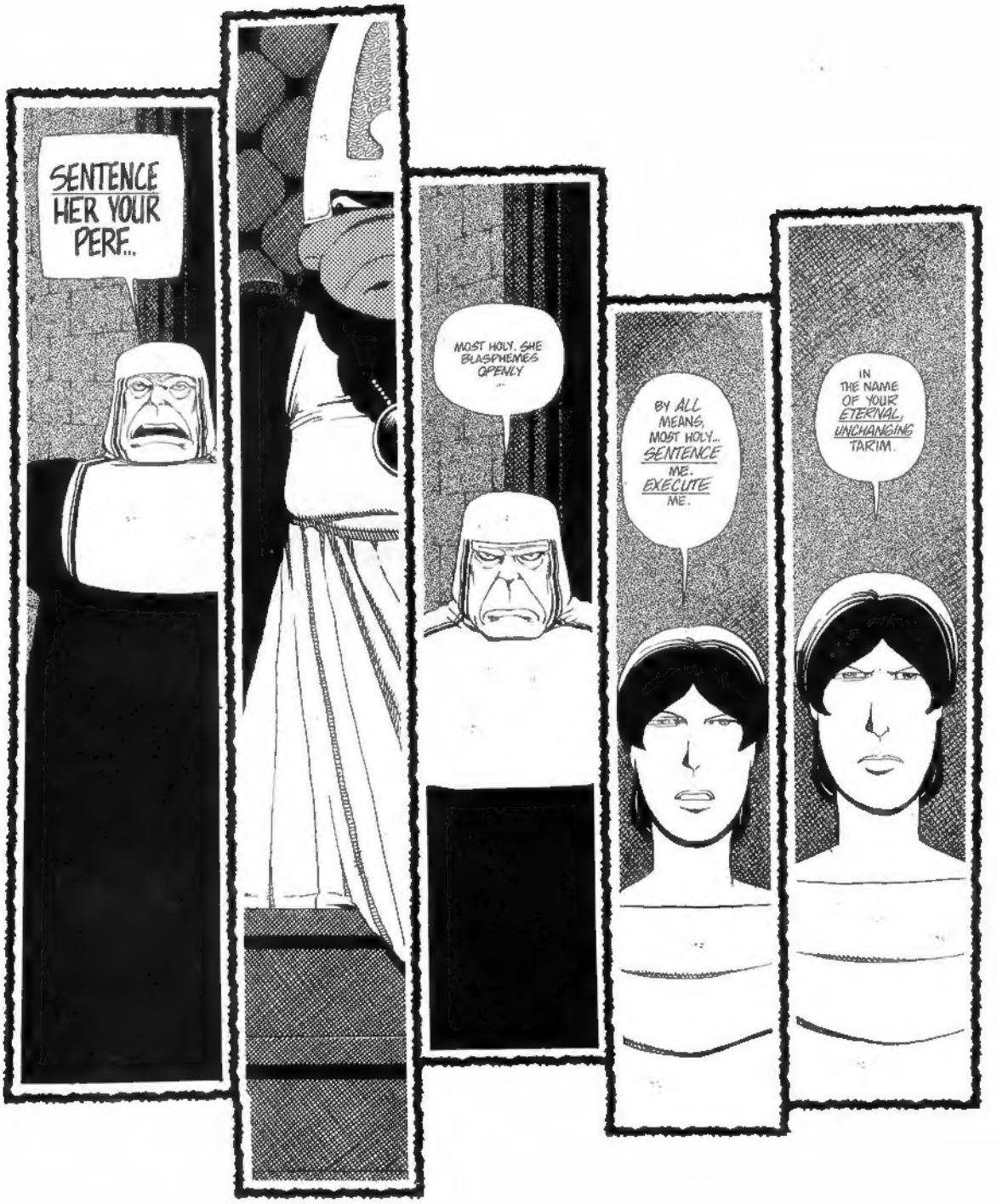
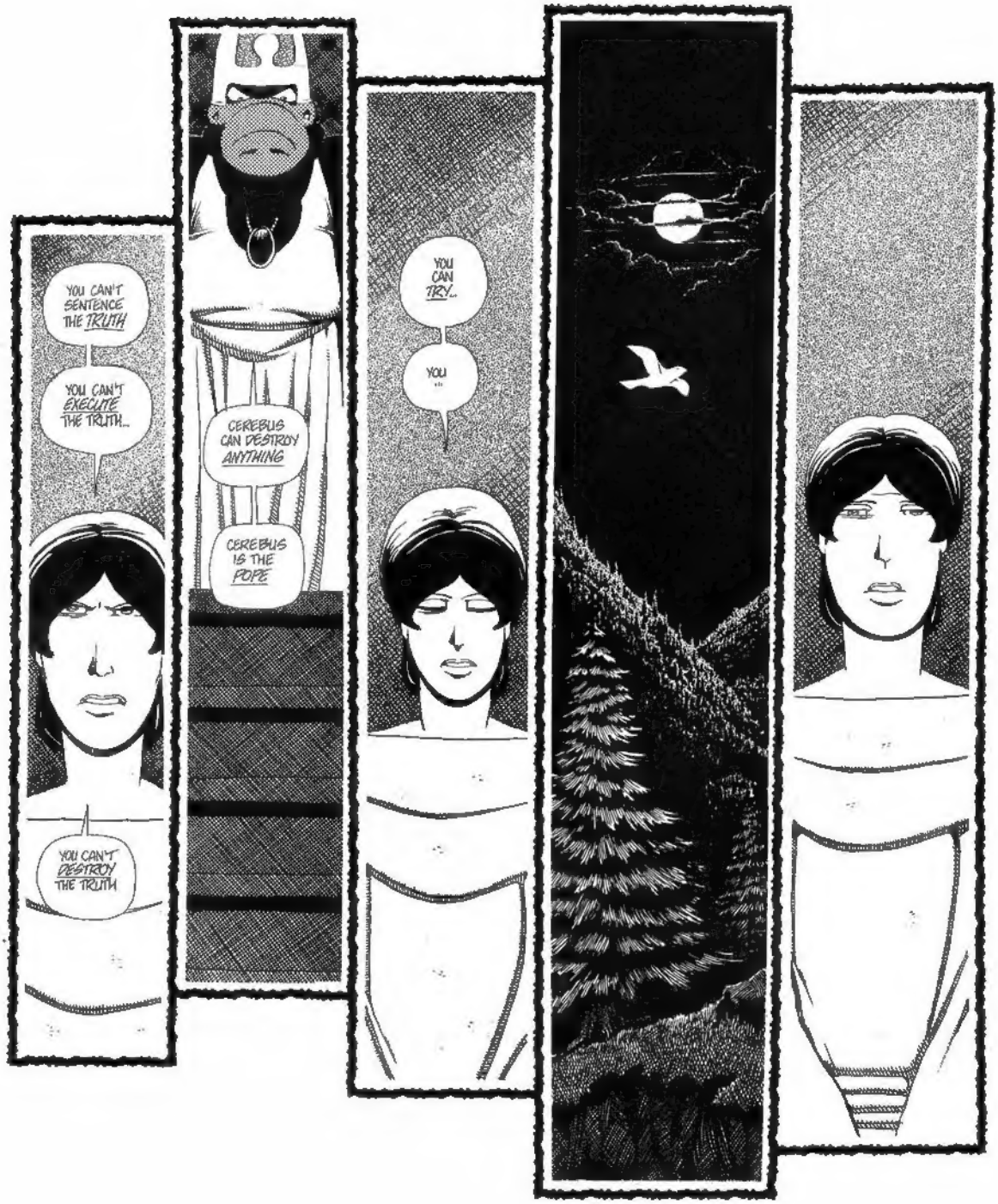
accurately inexplicable

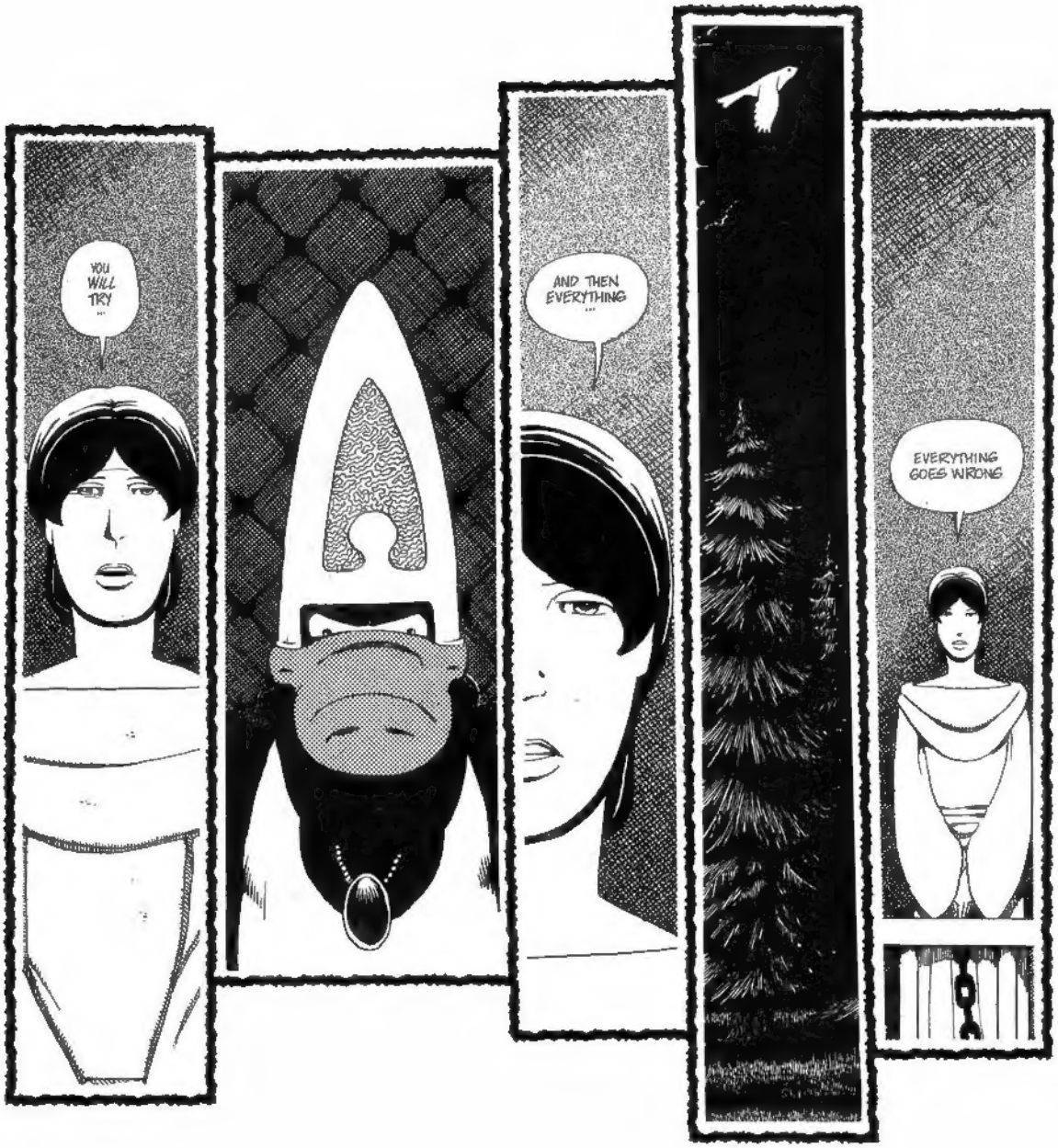

ALL, SAVE THE LIVING TARIM, HARLOT ...
THERE IS BUT ONE TRUTH...
BIRTH AND REBIRTH
THAT WHICH WAS ONCE...
... IS AGAIN ...
...AND SHALL BE, ONCE MORE, AT ITS APPOINTED TIME.

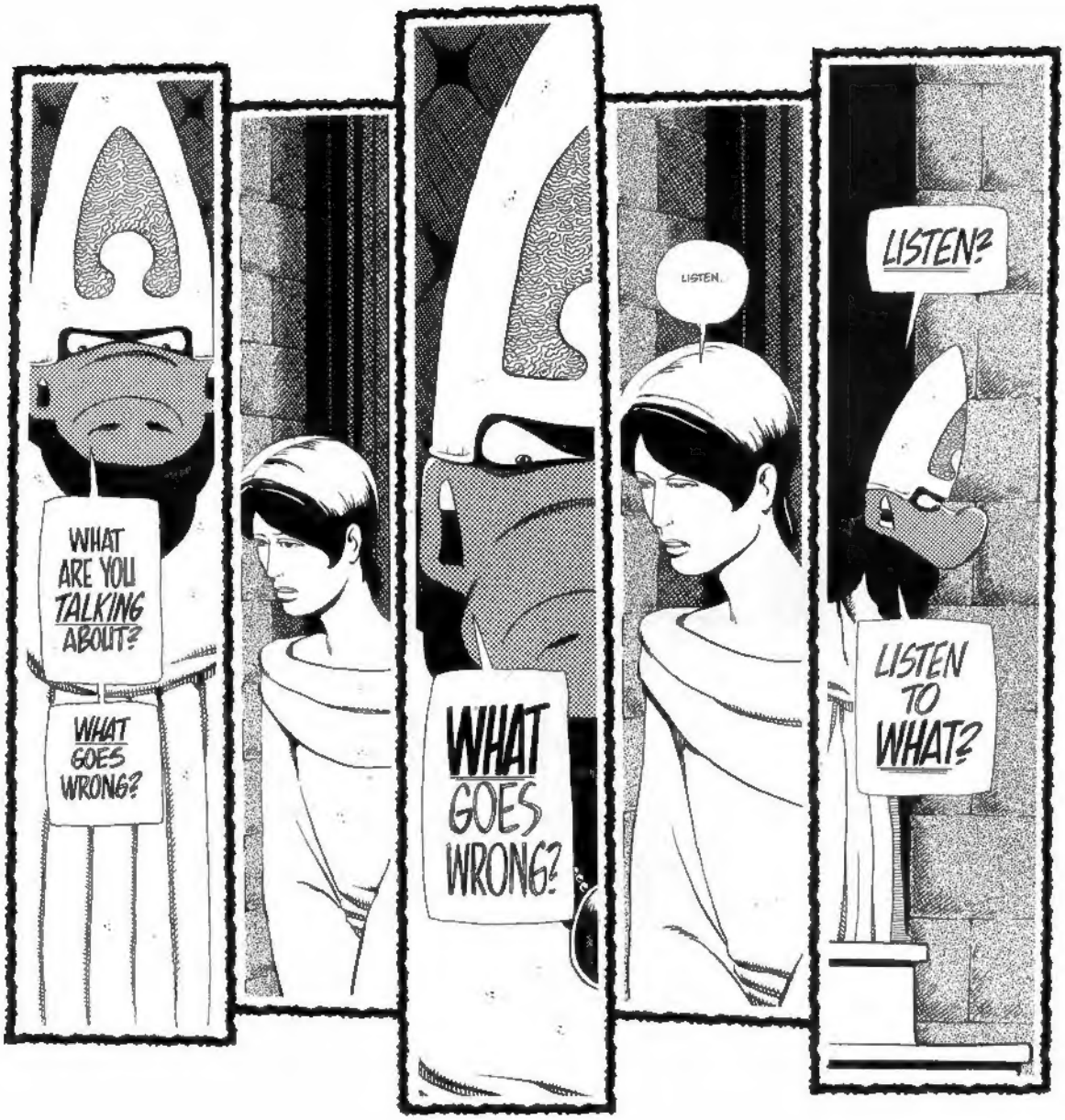

HE WHO IS ETERNAL...
UNCHANGING...
ALL. INCLUDING SHE WHO DIES...
...AND IS REBORN.
BLASPHEMY!
LOGIC..
HERESY!

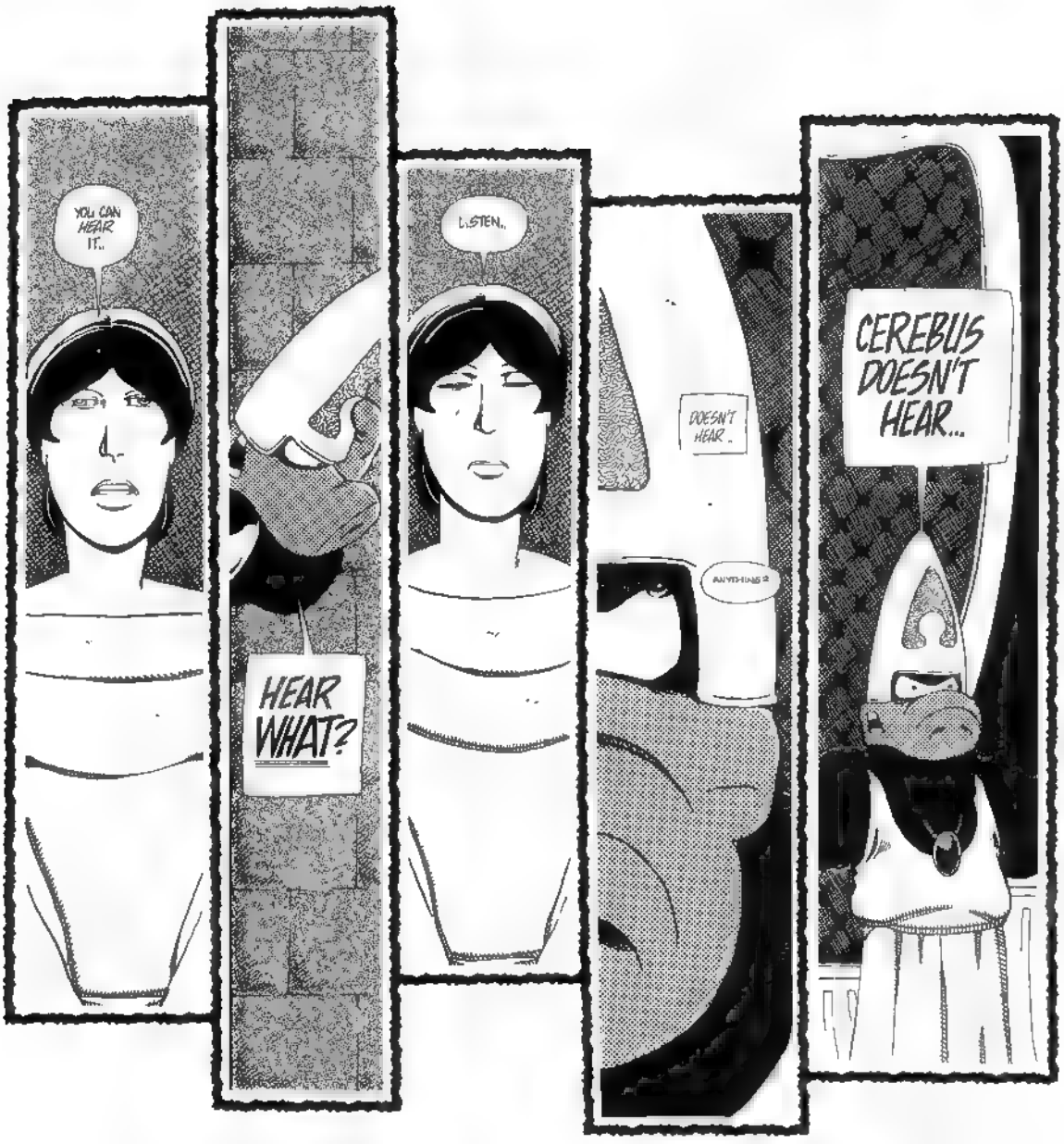

REASON!
IF YOUR TARIM CREATED ALL THINGS - WHY WOULD HE GIVE THEM CHARACTERISTICS DIFFERENT FROM HIS OWN?
WOULD AN ETERNAL BEING CREATE TRANSIENT LIFE?
WOULD AN INFINITE BEING CREATE FINITE DIMENSIONS?
MOST HOLY! SHE PROFANES THIS SACRED PLACE!
YOU ASK ME "WHAT IS TRUTH" AND I HAVE ANSWERED YOU...

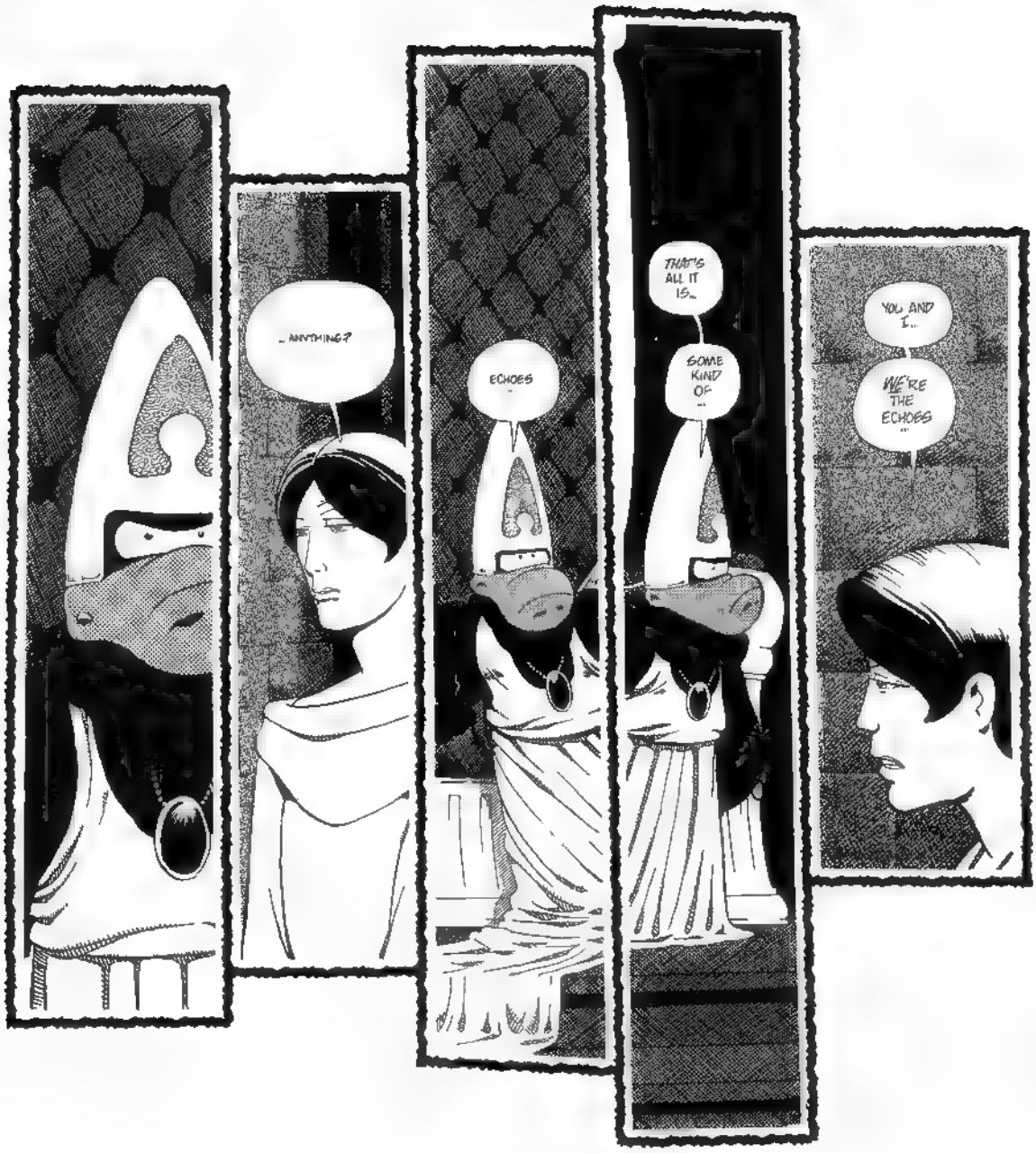

SENTENCE HER YOUR PERF...
MOST HOLY. SHE BLASPHEMES OPENLY
BY ALL MEANS, MOST HOLY... SENTENCE ME. EXECUTE ME.
IN THE NAME OF YOUR ETERNAL, UNCHANGING TARIM.


YOU CAN'T SENTENCE THE TRUTH
YOU CAN'T EXECUTE THE TRUTH...
YOU CAN'T DESTROY THE TRUTH
CEREBUS CAN DESTROY ANYTHING
CEREBUS IS THE POPE
YOU CAN TRY...
YOU ...

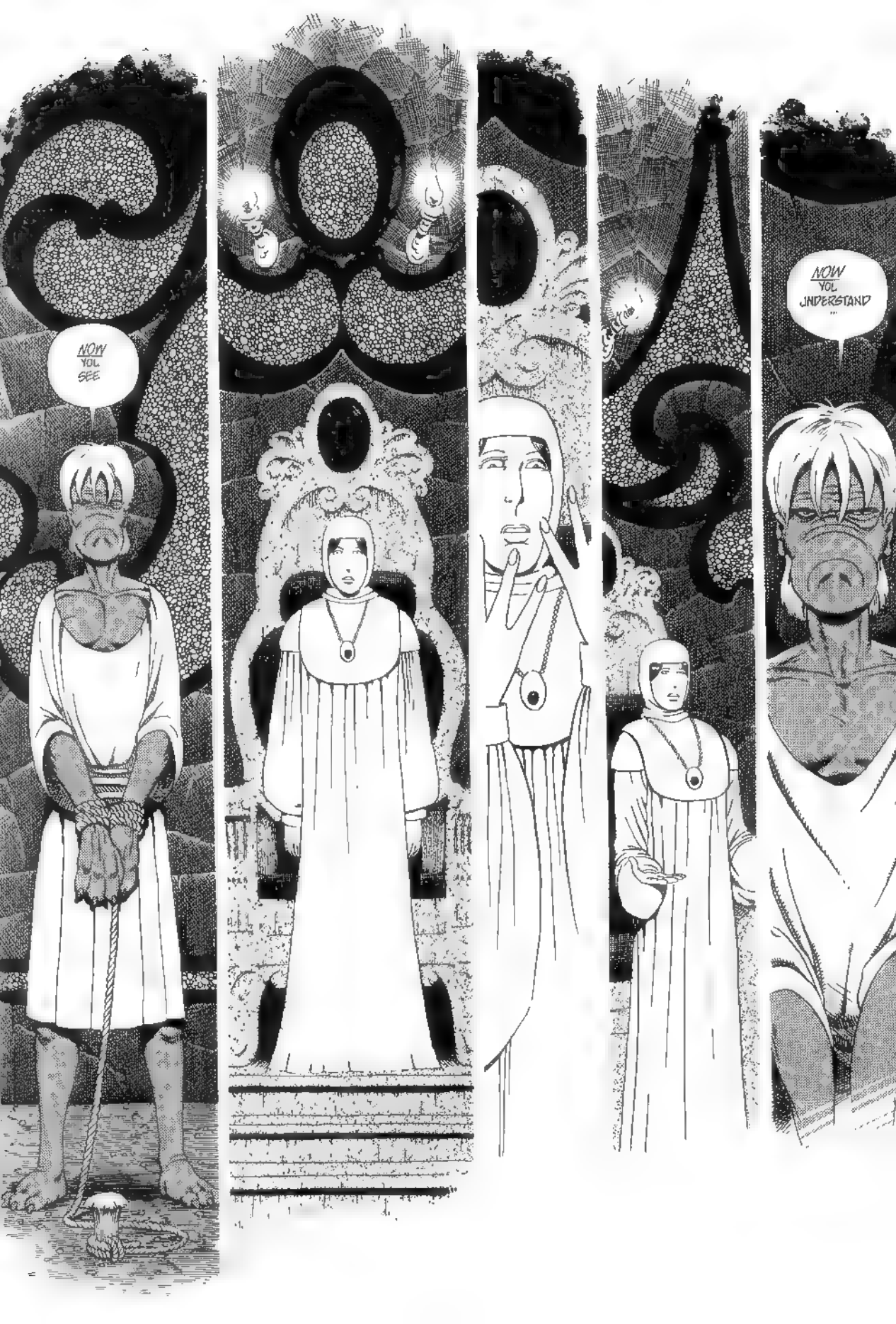

YOU WILL TRY ...
AND THEN EVERYTHING ...
EVERYTHING GOES WRONG


WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT GOES WRONG?
WHAT GOES WRONG?
LISTEN..
LISTEN?
LISTEN TO WHAT?

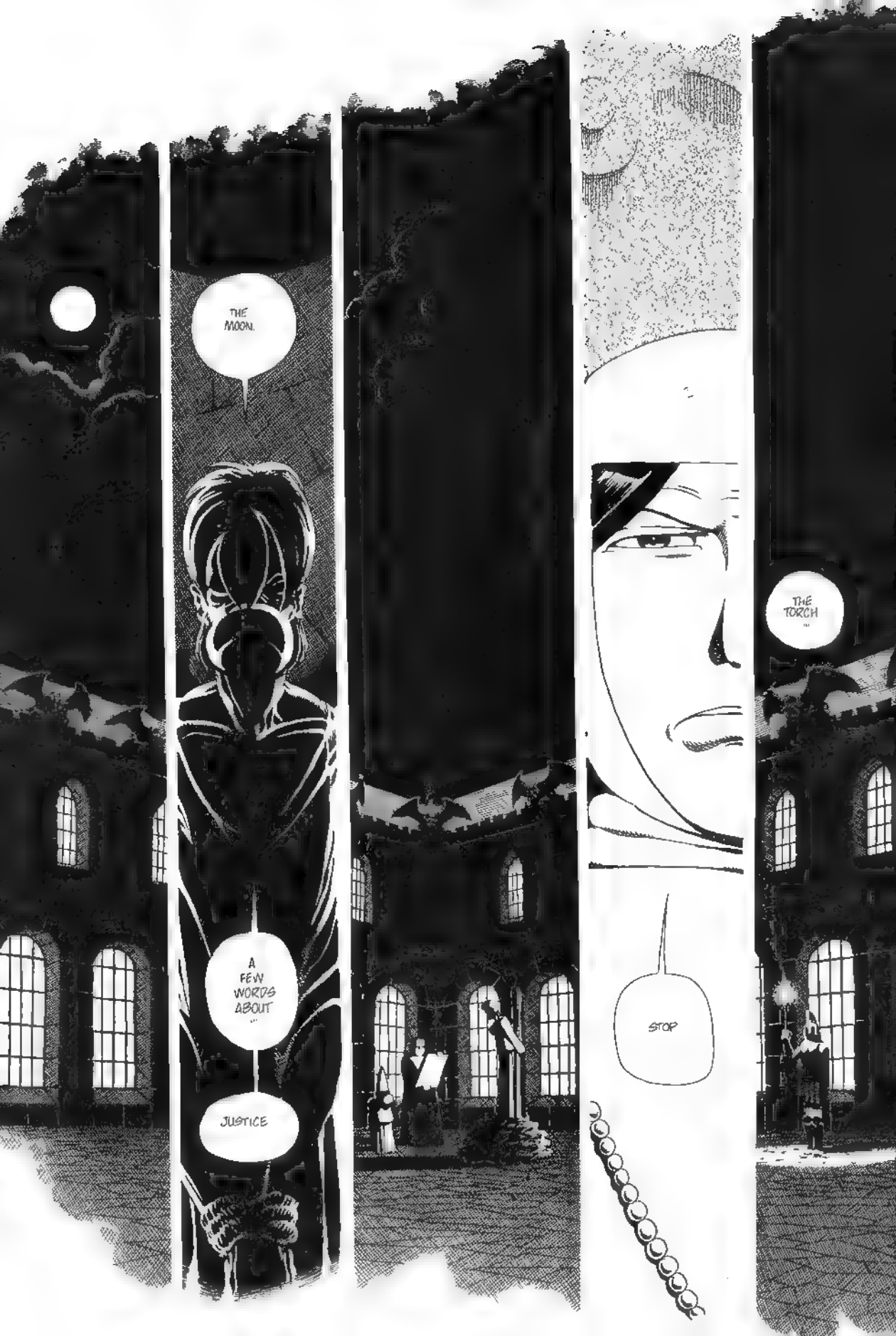

YOU CAN HEAR IT..
HEAR WHAT?
LISTEN..
DOESN'T HEAR..
ANYTHING?
CEREBUS DOESN'T HEAR...


... ANYTHING?
ECHOES ...
THAT'S ALL IT IS...
SOME KIND OF ...
YOU AND I...
WE'RE THE ECHOES ...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
DON'T YOU SEE IT YET?
SEE WHAT?!
NOW


NOW YOU SEE
NOW YOU UNDERSTAND

IT'S SOME KIND OF...
TRICK?
YOU KNOW BETTER THAN THAT
YOU REMEMBER HOW IT ENDS AS WELL
HOW IT ALWAYS ENDS
DON'T YOU?


THE MOON.
A FEW WORDS ABOUT ...
JUSTICE
STOP
THE TORCH ...

STOP IT.
THE FLAMES -
NOW
THE SMOKE -

THE SMELL OF WOOD
BURNING.
OF CLOTH
I'M... NOT LISTENING
I'M
BURNING
DID YOU NOT HEAR ME?!
HAIR
IN THE NAME OF
OUR LADY
BURNING.

OF
FLESH
GUARD!

NEXT: TRIAL'S END

A COLLECTOR'S DREAM...ON VIDEOCASSETTE

MEET

THE MASTERS OF COMIC BOOK ART

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The Spirit, Contract with God

HARVEY KURTZMAN
† *Mad, Little Annie Fanny*

JACK KIRBY
•• *Silver Surfer, The New Gods* •

STEVE DITKO
• • *Spider-Man, Mr. A*

NEAL ADAMS
• *The Batman, Green Lantern–*
• *Green Arrow*

BERNI WRIGHTSON
• *Swamp Thing, Frankenstein*

MOEBIUS
Arzach, Heavy Metal

FRANK MILLER
• *Ronin, Batman,*
• *The Dark Knight Returns*

DAVE SIM
Cerebus the Aardvark

ART SPIEGELMAN
Maus, Raw Magazine

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AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave (a.k.a. The lobster of Honolulu),

Three what? Aardvarks, presumably "Odd Transformations IV" certainly gives us our money's worth, both in overall plot and storyline, and with the art. The full pages and double page spreads were a delight to behold - have you been reading Border Worlds, by any chance?

Surrounding the hilarious scenes of Cerebus' embarrassment in front of the guard, you gave us a very heavy look at Cerebus' feelings in the dream sequence. He begins the issues (deep underground) weighed down by chains of guilt, about his rape of Astoria, and soon finds himself drowning under that weight. Astoria's motives are still unclear. Was she still manipulating Cerebus when he raped her? Does she want his child, as a connection between the philosophies of Cirinism, and what she conceives (no pun intended) as Cerebus' greater role in things? And what happened to the child she supposedly has already borne, by the way? Have we met him/her without knowing it?

In the next dream, having divorced Astoria, Cerebus finds himself high up, off the ground, but still surrounded by the buildings of the city, still dwarfed by many huge edifices, and trying to build a statue, presumably of himself, that's even bigger. He appears to have a complex about his size, possibly in a sexual sense, although indications are that he is sexually proficient. In the dream, he still sees the solution to his problems as throwing his woman (Astoria-as-Sophia) out of his life. However, the fact that she is caught on an updraft signifies that he knows that he cannot really dispense with women, and Astoria in particular, altogether This is emphasized as she clearly has information that is useful to him

Who are the other two Aardvarks? Cerebus' parents? It's possible that he never met his parents, as we have seen hints, in previous dreams, that he was brought up by human parents. Why is Cerebus an Aardvark, and why does he never question the fact that he is an Aardvark in a world of humans? We really should sit down and discuss this sometime! But what's this we hear about your not coming to England after all? And after you said you'd meet us at Forbidden Planet, too? You can stay with us if you like! When we read your note from the president, both of us had the same first thought, "I never looked at it that way before." It seems harsh to place a blanket condemnation on comics companies for putting a label on their products. Ideally, no labels, or ratings, should ever be necessary, and it should be up to the individual to decide what is appropriate for them, or their young children, to read. However, realistically, there are not enough responsible people out there. Do you think that labels are necessarily censorship? The way we understand it, the problem with DC's system is that they intend putting a label on a title and then censoring all contents of that title to fit the label, rather than judging each story individually, and putting a suitable label on whatever the creators come out with.

It is both a corporate and creative world, just now. Given that the big two have been around for many years, they must, out of necessity, own the characters that populate their own universe. Their attitude towards publishing, i.e hiring people to write and draw DC's own characters, is a valid one, as long as there is the opportunity for creative personnel to work on creator-owned products, as well The problem that DC and Marvel have is coming to terms with that within their own set-up, though Marvel's Epic line, so far, seems to have allowed creator-owned characters to come and go as they please Clearly, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons should be able to do this with Watchmen as well, and it is wrong that they cannot. At least we now have a situation whereby people can do something other than work-for-hire.

Getting back to Cerebus, congratulations on the success of High Society. Meanwhile, we look forward to a bi-weekly Cerebus for a while - but we hope you'll come over to England anyway, and don't forget to bring Gerhard with you!

Take Care,

Nigel Fletcher
59 Calabria Road
Highbury
London, N5 1HX
England

Malcolm Bourne
87 Greenfield Gardens
Cricklewood
London NW2 1HU
England

No. The problem with DC's ratings system was that it was instituted without any input from the creative people it would affect. It proved that creative people, while responsible for DC's success, are thought of as lesser beings to whom one dictates terms. Even Dick Giordano, a creative individual in his own right has become a Spiro Agnew to Jenette (Kublai) Kahn's Richard Nixon, advising Marv Wolfman that any complaints about the company should be handled internally, through channels, etc.-etc. The fact that Marv's editorial status was removed is very revealing of the corporate mindset at DC. To punish a writer-editor you take away his corporate status (editor) and make him "just" a creative person (writer) subservient to someone else (who will presumably be a "team player" who will know how to kiss the right asses in the right places and not trouble himself or DC with matters of morality and principle in public.)

I'm considering doing two Concorde signings in London and New York on the same day this fall. Stay tuned.

★★★★★★★★★★

Hey You,

Yea you Sim, did the Hawaiian sun fry your brains?

I'm pissed off at you and your storyline between Astoria and Cerebus. The 'rape' of Astoria by Cerebus was so damn offensive to me not because it was violent, it wasn't, but because it was so matter of fact and also humorous. Rape is shown as a thing you do to someone you want. Damnit it isn't!!!!!!!

Perhaps you will say it was done to lampoon certain well known 'religious' and political leaders who can't keep their zippers zipped Maybe you can say it shows the depth to which the earth-pig has fallen On the slim hope that Cerebus will soon get his punishment, maybe from Terim, and reap his just desserts for his despicable action, I will continue to buy this title until issue 100. If he has not, my consecutive run of Cerebus from issue 22 will stop there And then you can once again lower your circulation numbers on the inside front cover.

A possibly former reader,

Horace J. McConnell
6557 Oak Park Court,
Galloway, OHIO, 43119

That's all right. You'll come back

eventually.

****

Dear Dave,

I met you at the end-of-tour party last October at Forbidden Planet in London, and blew a perfect chance to tell you how I felt about Cerebus Before I go on, though, let me ask if you remember me. I was the guy who asked you about Jack Kirby's problems; not such a great question, I admit, but I got caught up in the immature need to be recognized by someone important. Anyways, my friend Kim appreciated you signing the "Glimmer Twins" issue for us, and got a kick out of your comments on my "playing it safe" by getting another signed just for me

ANYWAYS, you've heard everything I'm going to say, but I don't give a shit, this is MY story.

I picked up on Cerebus in issue #19, mainly because it looked like a Conan parody; I was still trying to avoid my raging hormones via D and D and such games, so it fit right in. Was I surprised! This was no ordinary comic book, and I was hooked from the start. Unfortunately, when my desires shifted from D and D to chasing busty blonde bimbos around the beach, I also abandoned Cerebus, thinking I was beyond such things.

About two years ago my then roommate in college got me hooked on comics again, and one of these was Cerebus. I had no clue what the hell was going on, but I stuck with it and, with the help of a few key back issues, got back on track. Things got so bad that before I left for London last fall (pretending to be a student) I had to make sure where the comics shops were. You don't know how thrilled I was to see that you were going to be at Forbidden Planet in October! I waited a long time to meetcha, and enjoyed your talk thoroughly. I can easily say that it was a high point of my visit to the U.K., and that's saying a lot.

Well, since coming stateside again I have curbed my collecting down to three books: Watchmen, Swamp Thing and Cerebus. With all the money I'm saving by not buying the latest X-Men Vs. The Goobers Team-up, I've bought many back issues, as well as High Society. You don't need me to say this, but I will anyways; keep up the good work, ignore the shithead critics, and let it all go to your head. You've earned it.

Faithfully yours,

Shaun Kelly
4 Hamilton Street
Quincy, MA., 02170

P S Say 'hi' to Gerhard.

Just don't forget those busty blonde bimbos. Priorities, you understand, priorities.

****

Dear Dave,

The cover was exquisite, capturing a broad and powerful feeling. "Odd Transformation 4" was moody and mysterious. It captured recent events and gave us a distorted reflection, like a mirror in a fun house I suppose that it is actually a glimpse at what is going on in Cerebus' head. I eagerly await each issue because you keep me in suspense. Well done.

I have followed Cerebus for a long time now, and I plan to read on until the last issue. I cherish my personal history with this comic. The time I spend with Cerebus is a priceless treasure. I have also read everything you've had to say in the letter column, and a selected sampling of what your readers have said to you. You have had much to say about the comics industry, a field near and dear to your heart (and your livelihood). I think you and many other people have missed an important point. In the last ten years or so, the comics industry has changed dramatically in many ways. Essentially, however, comic books are entertainment. I have learned to differentiate "Art" and "Entertainment". Art is a person's aesthetic expression about the nature of life, the universe, and everything. Entertainment is an attempt to aesthetically please or divert its consumers. Certainly, art and entertainment can and do overlap But the definitions help to distinguish creative integrity and formula hackwork. Marvel and DC (and Gold Key and Richie Rich and Archie) are out to create entertainment, because it sells better than art. They want to please their readers, so they keep asking them what they want (or what they **think** they want). If the company thinks enough people want Frank Miller, they try to give them Frank Miller. Thus, Frank was given the freedom to do the Batman the way he wanted to do the character, and the result was "Dark Knight". If people stopped buying Miller's work, DC would have dropped him, or at least given him less editorial freedom These companies are subject to the whims of the popular voice, because they make entertainment, not art If enough people want comics to be rated and/or censored, companies like DC and Marvel will listen to them. Jack Katz could probably care less what they say. His "First Kingdom" series is a personal creative vision that is best enjoyed by those who understand what it is. While he certainly wants people to like his work, he's not going to sacrifice his vision to please other people. Some time ago, you, Dave Sim, told yourself, "I'm going to do this my way. I hope they like it, but if they don't, they can fuck off!" Those probably weren't your exact words, but the meaning is there. You're only human. You gave in to popular demand when you did the "closet" story in issue fifty one. Since then, you've become extremely defensive to protect yourself from that sort of thing. You have even taken up sword and shield for the cause of creative integrity in the comics field But it is still a corporate world, and will continue to be as long as entertainment is more popular than art. And comics are still vulnerable to censorship, as entertainment always is. There is good news, though. The field has opened up enough to let art have a wider impact You have shown that art can even have a certain amount of financial success if the creative person is willing to take the risks. However, it is still easier and safer in the corporate world of entertainment. Security and freedom are always in conflict Art cannot be censored and will never die It just won't sell too well.

Why is entertainment more popular than art? That question could fill several more pages. Offhand, I would say that most people would prefer to escape reality rather than face reality (I know I do).

Naturally, many people will disagree with me. Some of my firends have argued with me about my definitions of art and entertainment. Some of my friends think I'm crazier than the March Hare!

Keep trying to make people think. It seems to be working.

Michael Clem
308 S 200 E Ave.,
Tulsa, OK., 74108

Makes a lot of sense. Thanks.

****

Now listen Dave,

I know you've said there's no point in criticising your work, but I think you ought to know that issue 94 has gone way too far and I'm sure many people will, like myself, have been offended by it. So I assure you, if Cerebus' head is ever again as badly out of proportion as it was in the middle of page 8, there'll be one less Martin in your readership.

Adios,

Martin McDonagh
3 Medlar Street,
London S.E. 5, Enland

First a Horace and now a Martin. A-V totters on the brink of extinction.

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"Sparkles" disco, CN Tower, Toronto
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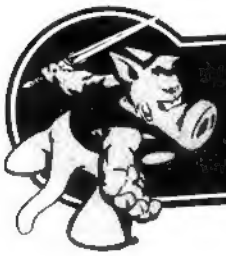
photo by some guy
charging five bucks



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Church and State Volume One (first printing) will be available from Aardvark-Vanaheim. The first addition consisting of six thousand copies is being sold on a first come first serve basis by VISA and MASTERCARD phone order, certified cheque or money order only. Single copies are $25.00 U.S. and $30.00 CDN plus $2.50 for postage, or 1 Box of 16 for $300.00 U.S. and $400.00 CDN. (Boxes will be shipped UPS). As of June 1st, we have sold two thousand of the six thousand copy print run.

★★★★★★★★★★

High Society (first printing) is sold out (still). Please stop sending money unless you are prepared to wait until October for your copy of the second printing. I would prefer (if you want a copy of the second printing) that you notify your local shop owner, so that he can inform his distributor and (three months from now) his distributor can inform us. I could be a real son of a bitch and urge you to order from us, but I am curious to see if we can get a respectable number of copies ordered through the traditional direct-sales outlets. So, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE notify your shop owner if you want a copy of the second printing. Thank you.

★★★★★★★★★★

Cerebus (reprinting the first 25 issues) is still scheduled for release August 15. The pre-publication price is $20.00 U.S. and $25.00 Canadian (plus $2.00 for postage andhandling).

★★★★★★★★★★

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KILL HIM!

?

HHULCHH

SORCERY